

EVANS: "Do you feel?--I think you've been rather kind to the Kennedy administration thus far although I think you do that pretty much with all administrations until you start finding what you think are weaknesses. Do you feel this is a real mistake on the part of Mr. Kennedy?"

PEARSON: "Yes, I do. I think this is a serious mistake. McCone has no background (there?)--he doesn't know anything about espionage problems, intelligence--"

EVANS: "Who does?"

PEARSON: "Well, a lot of people do. Allen Dulles certainly had a long background in it, and a lot of people from the State Department do, and this man has been a very successful businessman and all the records show that he's made a lot of money at government expense. It's all spelled out in past hearings before various committees, and why should he be head of an agency which has the power of life and death in making recommendations in certain parts of the world, especially in the Near East, where (?) is affected and where he owns--is the second biggest stockholder in Standard Oil of California and a big stockholder in Standard of New Jersey, which control the Arabian-American Oil Company."

WELDON: "Drew, the other day there's, I think, a Newsweek story which told about the columnists here in Washington most popular and influential with President Kennedy. Apparently the President reads regularly Lippman and Alsop and Reston and you, I think. Do you know how well you stand with the administration? To what extent do you think you influence the congressional and presidential actions?"

PEARSON: "Well, that's a very leading question that I shouldn't answer."

WELDON: "Well, you have some idea."

EVANS: "Have you any indication in regard to the McCone story? The President must have read that--have you heard anything from it?"

PEARSON: "McCone offered to resign the other day--"

EVANS: "As a result of the column?"

PEARSON: "Yeah, the President said not to resign, so I have no influence with the President."

WELDON: "But you do have entre, don't you?"

PEARSON: "Oh, yes. I had a very nice visit with the President last Saturday."

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PEARSON: "I pinpoint my shots very carefully. Anybody who reads the column--take, for instance, on McCone, will see that I spent weeks digging into the records, naming dates, amounts, everything that he's done. That took an awful lot of work."